

THE TEXAS "PANHANDLE."

A Fat Cattle Range Hitherto Unknown to the World.—The "Staked Plains"—How Water was Found—Fortunes in Live Stock—Growth of Colorado City.

Special Correspondence of the Globe-Democrat.

SAN ANTONIO, TEX., January 18.—Long reaches of red prairie land covered with mesquite and buffalo grass, sometimes rising into abrupt buttes, or breaking up into deep ravines and high ridges covered with jagged volcanic rocks, seamed with canyons, and at long intervals intersected by shallow, brackish streams—this is the Panhandle of Texas, the home of the jack-rabbit and the prairie dog, the native heath of the cowboy. There is no timber worth speaking of, except the mesquite shrub, which supplies food for beast and fuel for man. The seemingly harmless rivers, scarcely running the dry season, when swollen by heavy rains or a suddenly bursting waterspout, are transformed into foaming torrents which sweep men and stock to destruction.

SOIL AND WATER.

The Pandhandle comprises some fifty counties, which aggregate about 65,000 square miles of territory, and lies north of the 32d parallel of latitude and west of the 100th degree of longitude. A few years ago it was considered a desert, and the "Staked Plains" was a synonym for all that was sterile and forbidding. Now capital is pouring in, cattle feed upon a thousand hills and sheep innumerable crop the nutritious grasses of the valleys. It is impossible to compute the outcome of this vast scope of territory, or forecast its influence on the commerce of the nation; and all this mainly because in building a railroad across its southernmost part it was found that plenty of good water could be obtained at a depth of from twenty to fifty feet. The adventurous cowboy had long turned his wistful eyes toward the "Staked Plains," but the water problem baffled him. It remained for a much-abused corporation to open this vast scope to the settler. This was done when the Texas and Pacific Railroad was built from Texarkana to El Paso.

PHENOMENAL PROGRESS.

Development is the order of the day here as well as elsewhere. First a tent, then a board shanty, then brick and mortar. First the cowboy, then the owner of a herd, then a cattle king. The cowboy is a wild, rollicking, generous-hearted, enterprising fellow. With his white jacket, leather overalls, broad-brimmed hat, high-topped boots and heavy spurs he is the ideal of the picturesque. With his well-trained pony, Winchester carbine and six-shooter, with plenty of lariat at his saddle-bow, he counts for something on these Western plains. Two of them recently roped and captured alive a full-grown panther. I saw a fierce catamount which had been captured in the same manner. You may know a cowboy by two things—he wears a leather band buckled around his hat and always rides in a gallop.

COWBOYS' HARDSHIPS.

In a climate so changeable as that of Texas, where an hour may bring on a fierce "norther" that always freezes to the bone, any one exposed to its rigors, often without a tent, and with only a single oil coat and a limited supply of blankets, standing guard at night in the pitiless rain to prevent a stampede of the herd, and out far beyond all shelter for weeks during the "round-up," the cowboy's lot is not to be envied; his life is no sin-cure; he deserves more sympathy than he gets, and less blame than is usually bestowed on him if in seasons of hilarity he is guilty for grave indiscretions, and has some fun at other people's expense.

The cattle king is, usually, the cowboy grown wealthy, and settled into a soberer and less dashing style of life. He has learned to take care of what he makes. Many young men came to this country a few years ago with-out a dollar, and are now worth their

COOL HUNDRED THOUSAND.

True, we only hear of the successful ones. Many, doubtless, gave way to whisky, their worst enemy, and have either "passed over the divide," or are still spending their earnings in the bar rooms or at the gambling table.

The cattle business is not a haphazard affair. It has its system, its established custom, its code of ethics. Those who succeed in it get things down to a fine point. The "round-up" is the all-important event to the cattle men. In the spring they find that the snows and storms of winter have scattered their herds far and wide. The first thing in order is to hold a convention, at which the country is divided into districts, in each of which there is to be a "round-up," or collection of cattle. Each proprietor of a herd is expected to have a representa-

tive at all the "round-ups" in his vicinity to look after his interests, and see that his

YOUNG STOCK IS BRANDED.

Of course, each calf follows the cow to which it belongs, else the confusion would be insurmountable. Each brand is registered in the records of the county, and is all that is necessary to settle ownership.

The branding is not confined to the spring "round-up." During the summer their are frequent neighborhood or local "round-ups" to collect beeves for shipment and brand calves brought forth after the spring branding.

A yearling or older brute, which has escaped branding, is called a "maverick," and the owner of a herd with which it is found is at liberty to put his brand upon it, but the relations of *meum* and *tuum* are strictly observed, and no honest man will brand as his own cattle whose ownership he has any reasonable means of ascertaining. Occasionally a cattle man becomes unusually energetic in branding "mavericks," but he is spotted.

THE CATTLE BUSINESS

In Northwestern Texas is not carried on without risk. Occasionally, hard winter or extremely dry summer cause the loss of much stock, but the increase is so rapid and the profits are so large that losses which would break up a dozen wealthy farmers at the North are borne with perfect equanimity by the cattle kings. Any one who is fairly posted as to stock raising, has a few thousand dollars to start with, and is vigilant and industrious, has the chances largely in his favor, and this when he has divided the results of the closest figuring by two.

At Colorado City, 483 miles west of Texarkana, on the Texas and Pacific Railway, is found one of the centers of the cattle and sheep trade. It is situated on the Colorado River, in Mitchell County, and is surrounded on all sides by the

FINEST GRAZING LANDS.

Two years ago the first house was built, and the population is now about 2,300, having more than doubled during the past year. The railroad reached the town site in May, 1881, and there has been a steady boom ever since. The town was laid out by the railroad company, and the lots were sold on liberal terms. Since that time real estate has advanced 500 or 600 per cent. Brick and stone are rapidly taking the place of boards as building material. An elegant stone court house is nearly completed. The business men of the place have evidently come to stay, and everything is tending toward permanency. There are two banks, that of F. W. James & Co., which is the older, and is a prosperous institution. The Colorado National Bank has just been opened, with a paid-up capital of \$63,000. A. W. Dunn is its President, and W. H. Hendrix is Cashier. It has quarters in an imposing brick block just erected by Mr. Dunn, on Oak and Second streets, the business centre of the town. Mr. Dunn built the

FIRST HOUSE IN COLORADO CITY,

and is himself a fair representative of the skill and enterprise which make towns prosperous, and is also one of the typical cattle kings. He began with a small capital a few years ago. He has dealt in merchandise and cattle so skillfully that during the past year his sales aggregated \$1,000,000.

During the year 1882 Colorado City shipped 75,000 beeves and about 800,000 pounds of wool, besides what was done in stock cattle and sheep. The total business of the place for the year amounted to about \$10,000,000. This will be largely increased during the present year. It is difficult to buy a lot, even at a fabulous price, in the business part of the town, though there are plenty of speculators on the ground. To show what Colorado has to depend on for its large volume of trade, I give the following names of owners of herds, with the value of their stock: Dunn, White & Stevens, \$300,000; Winfield Scott, \$450,000; T. P. Stevens, \$200,000; Estes Bros., \$400,000; Peacock Bros., \$500,000; C. M. Mann, \$280,000; McIntyre & Barnett, \$200,000; Tom Dents, \$150,000; Martin & Cochran, \$100,000; Malin & Catlin, \$150,000; Smitten & Co., \$150,000; Dick Robertson, \$50,000; Peck & McWilliams, \$75,000, and G. K. Elkins, \$50,000.

THE LIST

might be continued. These constitute only a fraction of the whole number who trade at Colorado City. Besides, there are as many, or more, men handling sheep as there are handling cattle, though they have not so large amounts of capital invested. Most small capitalists go into sheep. There is, at present, intense activity in the cattle and sheep business in this country. Trades are rapidly consummated, money turned over

quickly, profits are heavy and the boom daily increases. English and American companies by the dozen are buying lands all over the Panhandle country, preparatory to placing large herds upon them. Whoever would go in to win had better take time by the forelock. The land will soon be all taken up, the business may pass into the hands of the few, and many who are over-cautious about investing may get left.

Railroad Fare in Texas.

St. Louis Railroad Review.

The three cents per mile rate, to which the railroads of Texas are by law limited, is perhaps not too small for most of them. Where a road runs through a populous section of country and has a large patronage it can afford to carry passengers for three cents per mile. The reports of most of the Texas roads show that their revenues have grown much larger instead of smaller since the law went into effect; and in this instance, as in others which have come under the observation of railroad men during the last few years, it has sufficiently appeared that reductions in rates of fare result in more travel. When these reductions are reasonable the roads making them will show greater gains. But the trouble in Texas is that the State is very large, and some sections sparsely settled. Many of its railroads, too, are long lines extending through sections with a small as well as those having a large population. On these lines there ought not to prevail the same rate for all divisions. The Texas & Pacific, for example, can make money on its eastern division when it can get three cents per mile, but on the western half of the line ten cents per mile is not an unreasonable rate. What is needed is a revision of the present law, a readjustment of rates and a classification of roads. Upon some of these it should be lawful to charge six or eight, or even ten cents per mile, while on others the rates could be fixed at three or four cents per mile. If this revision is made the Texas railroad companies would be satisfied, and some encouragement would be furnished to capitalists to invest more money in new roads in the State.

Valuable Tin Discoveries in Alabama.

From a late number of the *Ashland Banner*, Clay County, Alabama, we learn of the discovery of large and valuable lodes of tin bearing rocks, at the Broad Arrow Mines, near that place. Within the last year Mr. G. W. Gesner, of this city, having secured proprietary rights to the above lands, has erected machinery for crushing, stamping, and washing the ores, and is now engaged in working on an extensive scale.

The ore has hitherto been found chiefly as a finely disseminated oxide in gneiss, as in Germany and other localities, but indications strongly point to the existence of the compact oxide, cassiterite, somewhere in the lake. As the locality is readily accessible by railroad to Talladega, Alabama, and thence about twenty-five miles to Ashland it is confidently expected that this discovery and enterprise will be the means of attracting attention to a section hitherto little known. The country is well wooded and watered, of a mountainous character, and eminently adapted for mining pursuits. It is worthy of mention that this is the first attempt in the United States to work tin ore on the spot where found.



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